

cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford, never again can we afford, to live with the narrow, provisional, outside agitator idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds." And lastly he said, "Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid."

Dr. King was arrested repeatedly. But he left America the direction and the instruction of rendering aid, and as Members of the United States Congress, it is our challenge to render aid to America and to all of her citizens, to ensure that we provide them with the life and the dignity and the justice and the freedom promised by our Constitution.

I look forward to joining with my fellow Members as I lead a special order on Tuesday, January 16th, to truly account for his life. But I also am grateful this week for the minimum wage and prescription drug benefit reform and 9/11 reforms and a number of other issues we are looking forward to, will in fact honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address the House, and I will concur with my colleague, Ms. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, in honoring the legacy and memory of Dr. Martin Luther King and his contributions, and I must add Ms. Coretta Scott King and the entire King family and the King Institute in Atlanta, Georgia. This country will be forever grateful for the contributions of the King family and those who carry their memory.

Many of us know that Ms. JACKSON-LEE is going to have a special order on Tuesday. Many of us know that service is the way the King family wanted us to address this upcoming Monday, being able to carry out not only public service, which is random acts of goodwill throughout the country and your community where you live, but especially the day that we recognize his birthday. For his birthday to have birth here on this House floor and in this Congress is recognized as a Federal holiday, is something that this Congress should always hold on to.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Let me compliment the gentleman for beginning his special order with the reference to Dr. King. Might I just add how excited I am that Members are going home to their districts to be able to commemorate this holiday.

Might I just cite, for the first time in Houston, Council Member Ada Edwards and many other elected officials and myself will be walking silently. We love parades, and we will be commemorating that, but we will be walking silently. I want to pay tribute to that.

The AFL-CIO will be in Houston, its national officers and representatives, the Reverend Al Sharpton, commemorating.

Finally, we will have what we call the Frontiersmen breakfast, an annual event, for corporate Houston. I only cite that not to highlight Houston, but to say all over America, different representations, different communities, will be celebrating and commemorating his holiday, which shows the broadness of his legacy.

I thank you for allowing me to speak and I thank the King family as well.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so much, Ms. JACKSON-LEE. I know that many Members of Congress hopefully on both sides of the aisle will be joining you during your special order in recognition of the contributions of Dr. King and the entire King family, including Ms. Coretta Scott King.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take an opportunity to come down, and I have already given comments on the memory and legacy of Dr. King and the entire family for the record, and I know that that will be entered. I wanted to come to the floor just to sum up this week.

As you know, those of us in the 30-Something Working Group, we work to not only let the Members know what the Congress is doing and what we are leading in the direction of that the American people would like for us to go in in all areas, need it be defense, need it be standing up on behalf of our most vulnerable members of our society, our children and our elderly, those that have put forth opportunities so that we would have a better America. When we think about and reflect just on the last few hours here in the House and we reflect on what happened last week and the beginning of this week, I can't help but what we say in the Baptist Church, since I am Baptist, testify for a moment.

I have been in Congress now two terms. I believe we have done more in the last week and one or two days than we have done in a very long time as it relates to the 109th and 110th Congress.

I come today to report, because I know that some would say that while everything is happening and everything is going in reverse and people are not being included and goodness gracious, why didn't we have 10,000 hours of committee work, well, I would just say for everything that has passed, it seems like the American people are happier and pleased with the way this Congress is moving with its work.

I just want to make sure, because you can't say it enough, because it is important that the record is correct. When Members come to the floor, it is important that Members reflect on what they say before they come to the floor.

This is America. You are elected from your district. You can come and voice your opinion, not only of your constituents, but of all Americans, but I think it is important when we look at the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that we are as accurate as possible.

Historians will look back at this time and say, let me see what took place during that time in this country's history. I think it is important that the American people know that even though we represent individual districts, like I represent Miami Dade County and Broward County in Florida, I have to make sure that I carry not only the will of the people from that district, but also the American people. That is the reason why we have to make sure that the Members are informed of what actually took place, in case some forgot, and that the American people know what is going on. I say all of that to lay the facts out, and the facts are the facts.

The fact is that in the last Congress, the 109th Congress and the Congress before that one, the American people were very disappointed in what was not taking place, Mr. Speaker. It so great we have a 30-Something Working Group in this U.S. House of Representatives. I think I said the last time we were on the House floor, I believe just the night before last, we said we didn't create this 30-Something Working Group just to get in the majority. We didn't create the 30-Something Working Group, thanks to the Speaker, who then was minority leader at that time. We wanted to make sure the American people and the Members of this Congress knew that we wanted to work in a bipartisan way towards tackling the issues that the American people wanted us to tackle and represent them and not the special interests.

Now, there are some folk that are still on the other side of the aisle that are disappointed that the American people are getting what they have been asking for, need it be polling or what have you. I can tell you, some of my friends on the other side, a lot of my friends on the other side agree with us, and when I say "us," I am saying the Members on the Democratic side, on issues that are bipartisan.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for us to reflect on the fact that there are some Members on the majority side that have been asking for that all along. A majority of the Members on the minority side have been asking for bipartisanship. Now we have it.

Now you have the minority party, or the minority leadership, I must add, on the Republican side, they are so concerned that so many of their Members are working in a bipartisan way. It is not because they like the Democratic Members on the majority side. It is because they are voting on behalf of their constituents.

Well, what is wrong with that? I came down to the floor because, you know, I was with my daughter and we are in the office, it is the end of the

week, we are about to get some things together, and I said, you know, I want to continue to have the minority spirit that I had in the 108th and the 109th Congress, to say that this is historic in recent times, and working in a bipartisan manner.

Now, if I wasn't serious about bipartisanship and if the Democratic leadership wasn't serious about bipartisanship, I wouldn't be here. We are serious about this. We have got work to do. We don't have time to sit around here and say, I come here with a donkey hat on and say I am a Democrat and hail to the Democrats, whatever, you know. Bow down, what have you. We are in charge, and, you know, walking around here and looking important and not saying "hello" when I walk by people in the hall. That is not what this is about.

This is about working in a bipartisan way on behalf of the American people. I am so glad the Democratic leadership has embraced that. I am so glad that all Democrats here on this floor have embraced that.

I am also very pleased and glad that many of the Republicans have embraced that. Maybe not their leadership, because as far as I am concerned, on many of the issues that we passed on this floor a good number of Republicans have voted for it in this past week, Mr. Speaker and Members, but the Republican leadership are not voting for it.

Why? They want to show the difference between us and them. Well, we are not in the business of us and them anymore. And I think it is important that the American people and the Members understand that there is a public out there that is paying attention. There is a public out there. We have an escalation of troops out there now.

Well, we are going to separate the Members of Congress from the followers. Members are going to have to have a choice in what they want to be. We have to stand up on behalf of the people that have elected us and federalized us to serve in this U.S. House of Representatives on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, case in point. I will just make my point with this, and I would move on to other things. I think it is important that we understand in adopting the rules of the 110th Congress, there were many carrying on and saying, well, why do we have to do that? We have a new set of rules and we want to be better than you, when the Republican leadership had an opportunity to set those rules.

Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hand four pages of how under Republican control on more than 14 or 15 or even 20 examples, as a matter of fact, it is not four pages, it is six pages, of how Democrats were blocked, how Democrats weren't even allowed to offer amendments. House votes were held open for 3 hours, making U.S. history on behalf of special interests while they twisted arms. That is the past.

I got it right here. If any Member wants to come down on the floor and debate me on this, we can get a time and talk about this, because, you know something, we are right on this one. The people are right.

So, if you want to talk, these are the facts. The CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, you can go and cite it, because we in the 30-Something Working Group on this side of the aisle, we don't talk fiction, we talk fact, because that is the only thing that will hold up; not only the test here on this floor but the test of the American people, that challenge.

I want to commend some of the Republicans and all of my caucus for voting for some of the good things. The rules of the House, like I was mentioning, 232 Democrats with one Democrat not voting because they weren't here on the rules of the House.

Forty-eight Republicans joined us on PAYGO, which brought about the kind of accountability that we needed in this House to be able to stop the out-of-control spending that the Republican Congress has built up. That was this chart. There are so many people that are familiar with this. The record, \$1.05 trillion that was spent under Bush and the Republican Congress in just 4 years, that trumped 42 presidents and 224 years of history. \$1.01 trillion.

□ 1645

That vote started moving this in reverse, Mr. Speaker, saying that we would no longer spend, and I wouldn't even say the Federal tax dollars because we borrow from all of these countries to carry out that out-of-control spending, which we put together this chart to show all of the countries that we owe because of reckless spending and not living under PAYGO rules, pay-as-we-go rules. And so I think that is important for the Members to know and reflect upon. So if it was so bad, Mr. Speaker, why did 48 Republicans vote for it?

Now, I can tell you right now, I am pretty sure there are Members on the other side saying I am not voting with Democrats just to vote with Democrats. They are voting because that is what their constituents want. And if we are to work in a bipartisan way, I think it is important for them to continue to join us on great ideas. There will be times when there will be partisan votes on this floor, but they should be few, especially when it comes down to issues of the Federal Treasury.

Mr. Speaker, on implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, we were here on this floor talking time and time again about following the bipartisan commission report on making America safer. What is wrong with screening containers coming into this country before making it to U.S. ports? What is wrong with making sure we carry out all of the 9/11 recommendations? This was 9/11. We went to the war in Afghanistan, running after al-Qaeda and doing away with the Taliban because of 9/11.

Now, 9/11 Commission members and the American people, Democrats, Republicans and independents, are happy that we voted on this. Again, all the Democrats voted for it, with 68 Republicans voting for it. Mr. Speaker, that is the reason why we have some Members on the other side of the aisle running to the floor complaining. They are not complaining because they happen to be upset with us, and when I say us, I mean the Democrat majority, they are complaining because their Members are voting for their constituents.

I am sure there are Republican Members that are saying, I am a member of the Republican Caucus, I am not trying to caucus with the Democrats, but they are trying to represent their constituents. So let them. And so for the 68 Republicans who voted on behalf of the 9/11 recommendations, why not? It is protecting their constituents in America. Good for you.

So much work has been done, very little talk but so much work, on the minimum wage. Mr. Speaker, I cannot say enough about this. We have the charts from the 109th Congress, because I think it is important that Members don't get amnesia. We have a lot of new Members trying to figure out how to get around the office buildings here in Washington, D.C. I have been here now going on my third term, and I am still trying to figure out a few things myself, but I think it is important when it comes down to the business of the House, and you want to stay in the House and you want to have this honor to represent not only the people in your district but the American people, and you want to do right on behalf of the American people, then it is important, Mr. Speaker, that we share this good information not only with the new Members but the present Members that have been here, because the American people have spoken.

Let me share these figures. These are the pay increases of Members of Congress. In 1998, \$3,100; in 2000, \$4,600; 2001, \$3,800; 2002, \$4,900; 2003, \$4,700; 2004, \$3,400; 2005, \$4,000; and 2006, \$3,100.

Now, here is the point that is very, very important, Mr. Speaker and Members. I am not here to say that, well, you know, this is not justified. Just as a Member who is financially challenged, like myself, I will tell you there are some Members here, this cost-of-living adjustment, whatever the case may be, maintaining two households, I don't want to make an argument there. But if Members felt it was important to give themselves a raise and at the point when you start getting in the back years, the Democrat leadership made the decision that we will not give ourselves a pay raise unless the American people get it because we are tired of fighting for a pay raise for them, yet when it comes to Members of Congress, please join us in making sure we get a cost-of-living adjustment.

We put our foot down. And now, this week, Mr. Speaker, we were able to

give the American people a pay raise. Not because Republicans said we should do it. It is because we have a Democratic controlled Congress. And that is the problem that some Members on the minority side have with progress on behalf of the American people.

It is going to be \$7.25 that people are going to be making now. Believe it or not, we are going to get it passed in the Senate and the President will hopefully sign it. We had 82 Republicans that joined, and all the Democrats on this side of the aisle, in voting to increase the minimum wage. What we called the fair Minimum Wage Act. But, Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership voted against it.

How do you jump on top of the head of somebody making \$5.15 an hour? How do you stand on top of their head and say, well, you know, we can't do it because it is gonna hurt somebody. CEOs are making, oh, boy, they are making more than the minimum wage worker would make in their entire lifetime, Mr. Speaker. In some instances, in a month. Yet we have Members here standing on top of the head of folks making \$5.25 an hour and still carrying on about the vote.

If it is so bad, Mr. Speaker, why did 82 Republicans join Democrats in voting for what was right? Why? Because they were representing their constituents. So I commend all my Democratic colleagues that have been waiting for an opportunity to vote on the floor on the minimum wage, and I commend the chairman, Mr. GEORGE MILLER. I am glad he lived long enough to see this happen there in the Education and Labor Committee.

But 82 Republicans joined Democrats in that. And that is good and that is bipartisan and it was the right thing to do, and I am glad they did it. But I want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, while we are here setting the record straight, not only talking about the vision of the Democratic leadership and caucus but also talking about bipartisanship, because that is the reason why I came to the floor today, to talk about bipartisanship. That is the record.

I don't care what anyone else says. And I say again, these Republicans voted for this Democratic movement to raise the minimum wage because it was a part of our six in 2006 plan. Now, some may say, well, let's have a committee meeting. Well, goodness, let me just show you this, six pages, six pages where we did not have committee meetings. In the 108th Congress I saw with my own eyes a bill filed in the morning, went to the Rules Committee, and was on the floor and passed by 2 p.m., and then passed in the Senate and went to the White House the next day. For one person I watched it happen.

So don't come to the floor, especially when it comes down to something like the Federal minimum wage that will help workers throughout this country and start raising a "yeah, but." It is

progress. I think the people like it. I think that is why they elected us to come to Congress, to get something done.

Here is another point. The Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act. Why is the Republican minority so scared of this? I can't understand it. Well, I look at companies, and I look at HMOs, and I look at other folks that have price negotiating opportunities and they are trying to drive down the price with their little group that they are dealing with. And now we are saying, the Federal Government, let's get the Secretary to try to see if he or she can make this happen. What is the problem? I can tell you what the problem is, it is that 24 Republicans voted with all Democrats to make that happen. What is wrong with that?

While I talk about the fact that my Republican colleagues are joining us in bipartisanship, you have to commend the Democratic leadership on this side of the aisle for having the gumption to do what they said they would do. Now, that may seem like something very small in American households throughout the country, because usually when you say you are going to do something, you do it. You know, I tell my mother, I tell a family member that I am going to do something, I try my best to do it. But when I make a promise, I have got to do it.

We made a promise, and it is not a secret, that the minimum wage would be raised in the first 100 hours. We made a promise we would pass a package on ethics. We made a promise that we would make sure that we have price negotiations for prescription drugs. We made a promise, Mr. Speaker, that we would reverse royalties and other tax breaks to large oil companies and make sure that we have innovation in alternative fuels. We made a promise, Mr. Speaker, that we would reduce the student loan package; making sure that we reduce what the Republican Congress did, taking money to give to the super wealthy in this country a tax break.

We promised we would do these things. We promised, Mr. Speaker, that we would do this in the first 100 hours. Everyone knew it. It wasn't a secret. We promised that we would make sure we wouldn't de-fund the troops when they are in harm's way. The troops. Then all of a sudden you get this escalation in troops.

What is about to happen, Mr. Speaker, and I think the administration knows, and I think the minority party knows that we are about to have some committee meeting in a few minutes. We have just organized this Congress and we are going to start asking some of the tough questions. Where did this money go? Why was this company over here able to abuse this contract and nothing was said? Why are they still receiving Federal dollars? Why are these eight brigades of Army reservists going back to Iraq for a fifth term? Why don't we have other coalition

partners joining us? Why won't we take the training wheels off the Iraqi government? All of these questions have to be answered.

I like the bipartisan spirit that is going through the floor as a Congress now, or in the halls of Congress. I think it is important that we continue to encourage that, Mr. Speaker and Members. And I think it is important that Members realize that, especially when they come to the floor to start talking about issues that are facing the American people. During the 109th Congress, one of the most partisan Congresses, which passed no bipartisan votes, this week we passed bills with 60, 70, 80 Republicans joining us on these votes.

So I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that, again, we let the facts roll out. Again, I challenge my colleagues. And the reason why I can stand here with great confidence, Mr. Speaker, and the reason why I can even challenge some of my Republican colleagues or those outside of this great institution of ours, the House of Representatives, the people's house, is that I speak of the truth. If I wasn't speaking the truth, and if I wasn't citing the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, you know, this notebook is just not a page on the top and newspaper in the middle. These are facts.

So as we move forth in this 110th Congress in a bipartisan way, and making America stronger and better for our children and grandchildren, let that happen. The Republican leadership can say whatever they want. We are in the majority. But you know something, we still have a minority spirit. The minority spirit is making sure that we fight on behalf of those who need representation in this House. Not the special interests.

The special interests have their representation, or they had it here in this House. And those that continue to carry the water on behalf of the special interests that are totally against or versus the American people, Mr. Speaker, because it is right, they will lose. And that is just where it is.

So when we start talking about the integrity of the U.S. House of Representatives, we start talking about the things we would like to do on behalf of the American people, then we are serious about it. Now, if folks want to be serious about coming and representing special interests against the will of the American people, have at it, because there are Members of this Congress, or former Members of this Congress, who did that. And guess what? They are reading what the Congress is doing in the newspaper when it is dropped on their front door.

I am not going to be a part of that group. I am here to make sure we represent the folk that sent us up here to represent them.

□ 1700

I think it is important that we remember that. Have faith in the American will. If every Member was to carry

themselves in the way the night that they were elected or the day that they were elected, of all the things they said they wanted to do before they got here, then this would be a better country. I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that while we have that spirit, bipartisanship, let's continue it. Let's continue the spirit. It's not about being in the majority and we just want as a strategy to keep you in the minority, no, it's not a strategy to keep the Republicans in the minority. It's just representing the American people. They have had their opportunity to do it. They had the last 12 years to do it. They can't come here and say, we balanced the budget. All they can say is that we have deficits as far as the eye can see.

What did we do? First order of business, Mr. Speaker, not only passing a new rules package that cut out a lot of the stuff that went on in the 109th Congress, the 108th Congress, the 107th Congress, but we also passed the pay-as-you-go rule to make sure that we say we're going to spend it, we show how we're going to pay for it.

I can tell you right now, that is a paradigm shift coming from this side of the aisle that we have the only record in Congress in balancing the budget. We on this side of the aisle are the only party that can say that without one Republican vote that took place. When that happens again, Mr. Speaker, as we work through trying to dig out of the ditch that the Republican leadership put the American people in, we want to do it in a bipartisan way. We don't want history to repeat itself without one Republican vote we balanced the budget. We don't want that to happen.

When we deal with Social Security again, we want it to happen just like when Tip O'Neill was sitting in that seat, Mr. Speaker, and Ronald Reagan was in the White House. They got together in a bipartisan way and said, let's save Social Security together. We don't need to run around here with a flag that says Democrat and says, we did it and they didn't. Let's work together. Let's work together in making that happen. That is why it is very, very important, Mr. Speaker, that we work in this bipartisan spirit as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, as we reflect on the past, I just wanted to come down to the floor and make sure that we set the record straight that there are a lot of things that happened and did not happen in the 109th and 108th Congress. I am only speaking for the Congresses that I have been here for. My mother before me served in the five Congresses before that, so there was a lot of dining room table talk about what was going on here in Congress or what wasn't going on here in Congress. But I can tell you as it relates to the Democratic side of the aisle and even the Republican side of the aisle, Members voting common sense, Members voting on behalf of their constituents back home, I like what I see. The American people

like what they see. If we didn't like the bipartisanship, Mr. Speaker, there would be no reason to come to the floor and share ideas and plans with the Republican Members of the House because we said, well, we just want all the credit for what's happening right now. No, we share that in a bipartisan spirit and we stand on the mountain of bipartisanship in this new 110th Congress.

The Republican leadership is trying not to stand on that mountain of bipartisanship. They want to stand on the mountain of us against them. Well, this is the U.S. Congress. This is us. It's not us against them. That is a debate for somewhere else. But these major, major, major, major issues that I outlined here in the last 30 minutes, Mr. Speaker, are bipartisan issues that we should be able to join elbow to elbow and lock in together and work together on these issues. I look forward to dealing with this, working with not only the American people on these issues but also Members of Congress on dealing with this issue of doing away with this issue of partisanship on major issues.

I wanted to let my Democratic colleagues and leadership know that we are on the right track. We are on the right track and the reason why we are here in the U.S. Congress. We are on the right track in working on behalf of the American people, all of us. If someone tries to pull you away from voting otherwise, against your constituents, you need to share with them that you love being a Member of the U.S. Congress, want to continue being a Member of the U.S. Congress, because those who voted against the will of their constituents are no longer Members of Congress. That's something to take into consideration.

As we have talked about the minimum wage, Mr. Speaker, I am so glad to be joined by my colleague who represents the American Samoa islands. I want to thank him for being here. We have worked together over the last two Congresses. Before that he worked with my mother who was here. They are good friends. I am so glad you came down to the floor to join me.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I thank my colleague and dear friend for allowing me to intervene in this special order and I really appreciate the courtesy extended to me to discuss the issue of H.R. 2 which was recently passed by this body yesterday. As you know, one of the specific provisions of the bill provides for the application of the Federal Labor Standards Act to the Northern Marianas territories. I do want to say that in a response to recent comments made by our colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY), saying to the effect that something is fishy about this proposed legislation, I would suggest that before he starts spouting off his mouth, perhaps he should get the facts first before expressing an opinion to this issue.

The fact of the matter is the Fair Labor Standards Act does apply to

American Samoa, my district, since 1938. So this whole idea that American Samoa has received a special exemption and the Fair Labor Standards Act not being applicable to my district is totally wrong and erroneous. The fact of the matter is since 1956, the Congress amended the Fair Labor Standards Act requiring at that time most of the territories, who are very difficult in terms of economic development and in the process the other territories went on their own ways and the Federal minimum wage law became applicable, except for my district.

The fact of the matter is under the Fair Labor Standards Act, the U.S. Department of Labor every 2 years would constitute a committee composed of those who were members of the labor union, someone representing management, someone representing the local government officials and for a whole week we would conduct hearings in trying to determine what is the economic status of the territory relative to its ability to provide what is considered fair and equitable salaries and wages for both government workers as well as the private industry workers.

It so happens that rather than being called a banana republic, I am a tuna republic because that is our main industry. I happen to have the two largest tuna canning facilities in the world. We export almost \$500 million of canned tuna to the United States and provides 5,000 workers employment opportunities. I have in my district Starkist Corporation that was owned by Heinz Corporation, is now owned by Del Monte, whose headquarters are based in San Francisco, and Chicken of the Sea's headquarters is based in San Diego.

The fact of the matter is I wanted to note for my colleagues, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) and also the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), that the reason why this provision is to include Northern Marianas is because the Northern Marianas is not included in the Fair Labor Standards Act.

I might also want to note the fact that our colleague, GEORGE MILLER, for years has been very concerned about the garment industry that developed out of the Northern Mariana islands. And who were the best patrons of the problems that we have in the Northern Marianas? A fellow by the name of Jack Abramoff and former Congressman Tom DeLay. And every time we talk about sweat shops, the way that expatriates were being hired, cheap labor and the real serious problems that we have had in the Northern Marianas, the Republican Congress did not take any action on the matter.

The fact of the matter is there is a fellow by the name of Willie Tan who was closely associated with Mr. Abramoff. After finding out that he had violated how many Federal labor laws, he paid up front \$9 million, not even questioning whether or not that the investigators that went there to

find out if there were violations of labor laws, he went and he paid off on this.

What has happened is that the garment industry in the Northern Marianas has gone down. And where is Mr. Willie Tan now operating his garment factories? In China. I think it would be important for our Republican colleagues first to understand, we are not exempted under the standards of the Fair Labor Standards Act. I want to make that point clear and I really, really appreciate the gentleman allowing me to correct these sweeping statements made by our colleagues from the other side suggesting that our Speaker has made this special provision just to exempt one of her corporate constituency which happens to be Del Monte. This is not true. This is absolutely not true.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. There is so much going on right now that is working on behalf of the American people. There are some Members of the minority party that feel that they need to come to the floor and raise objection to that, with the blessings of the Republican leadership. Because when you come to the floor, you have to have the okay of the leadership of your side of the aisle. I went through earlier this afternoon about Republicans joining Democrats in these votes. This bipartisan spirit, that is the only way I can figure this out because the misinformation that is coming to the floor and that is being given out to the American people, Mr. Speaker, you represent the area that they are so concerned about and they don't even bother to pick up the phone and say, is this true or that true or even doing the research. You can look in the law.

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. Not even the courtesy, to my colleague from Florida, to make such statements and to say that the honorable Speaker from San Francisco is being hypocritical in saying that one of her constituent companies is being let off the hook in this exception for American Samoa because we have the presence of Del Monte through the Starkist Company that does the packing of canned fish in my district. It is right there. I wanted to be very plain and clear on this and wanted to note, also, that Mr. GEORGE MILLER for the last 15 years as the senior member of the House Education and Labor Committee has brought this to the attention of the Republican Congress how many times, to say something is going on that is wrong with the sweat shops that were developed out of some of these business people only to take advantage of the cheap labor.

I say that, yes, the beginning salaries of the workers that we have there is below Federal minimum wage. But there is a reason for it and that is the reason why the Federal Government through an act passed by the Congress since 1956, we followed that religiously for the last 2 years. I have disagreements also at times with the two major

corporate companies that do business in my district, but that is part of the process and I have always advocated that we should get better, higher salaries for our workers. But in the process, the point that I wanted to make to our colleagues and friends in letting them know is that, yes, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Federal law relating to Federal labor standards does apply to the territory of American Samoa. However, in the Northern Marianas there is nothing.

There is a real interesting question. Because the Northern Marianas came into this unique political relationship with the United States which is called a covenant relationship, there may be some provisions in there that are going to be questioned. It is my intention that I am going to call Chairman RAHALL as well as Mr. MILLER. We hope to have an oversight hearing on this issue as soon as we can at the earliest possibility, maybe sometime next month. We want to find out exactly the whole thing.

But for them to say that there is a double standard that our side of the aisle have taken is utterly not true. I want to make that firmly established in the RECORD. I will elaborate on this issue more specifically sometime next week when I take a special order, but I do want to thank my good friend and colleague from Florida for giving me this opportunity to clarify this, I wouldn't call it a misunderstanding but a misaccusation, I suppose, is a better word for saying it. But I do want to thank my good friend for allowing me to say this.

□ 1715

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit some documentation to be made part of the RECORD.

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 10, 2007.

FALEOMAVEGA COMMENTS ON MINIMUM WAGE
BILL NOW BEFORE CONGRESS

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that in response to articles by the Washington Post and inquiries by the Washington Times he is speaking out about the minimum wage bill recently introduced by the House leadership.

"Despite recent claims made by the Washington Post which suggest that American Samoa is exempt from the federal minimum wage process, I wish to set the record straight," Faleomavaega said.

"The Fair Labor Standards Act has applied to American Samoa since 1938. After enactment, Industry Committees were established to phase low-wage industries in to the minimum statutory wage making American Samoa, as well as all other US Territories, exempt from mainland minimums but bound by minimums determined by Special Industry Committees. At the time, Congress believed that application of mainland wages to territorial island industries would 'cause serious dislocation in some insular industries and curtail employment opportunities.'

"For this reason, since 1956, and in accordance with Sections 5, 6, and 8 of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. Sections 205, 206, 208), the Wage and Hour Division of the US Department of Labor continues to con-

duct Special Industry Committees every two years in American Samoa to determine minimum wage increases.

"While these Industry Committees have been phased out in other US Territories due to their more diversified economies, American Samoa continues to be a single industry economy. In fact, more than 80 percent of our private sector economy is dependent either directly, or indirectly, on two U.S. tuna processors, Chicken of the Sea and StarKist.

"As has been repeatedly stated at our Special Industry Committees, a decrease in production or departure of one or both of the two canneries in American Samoa could devastate the local economy resulting in massive layoffs and insurmountable financial difficulties.

"For this very reason, I do not support efforts to apply mainland minimums to American Samoa at this time. The truth is the global tuna industry is so competitive that it is no longer possible for the federal government to demand mainland wages for American Samoa without causing the collapse of our economy and making us welfare wards of the federal government.

"However, I continue to believe it is a crying shame that for years StarKist's parent company, Heinz, paid its corporate executives over \$30 million per year in salary and stock options and bonuses while workers in American Samoa have not been paid decent wages on scale with our local economy. This is why I have fought year after year for increased wages for our tuna cannery workers and I will continue to make my views known before Special Industry Committees which have been established by federal law.

"CNMI should follow suit and support Special Industry Committees which are in place to protect workers from labor rights abuses. Ten years ago, I suggested to CNMI leaders that they should come under the umbrella of federal law and support Special Industry Committees but CNMI failed to take action. In other words, unlike American Samoa, CNMI is operating outside of the scope and intent of the Fair Labor Standards Act and this has led to well-documented worker abuse. For this reason, my colleagues have taken a stand and said enough is enough and I support Chairman George Miller's actions.

"Finally, I am aware that some may point a finger at American Samoa as a result of labor violations at the Daewoosa garment factory. But, in response, let me say that I personally called for a federal investigation into the reported abuses and the federal government took immediate action. Consequently, the owner of the factory, Kil Soo Lee, was prosecuted in federal court and the factory was subsequently shut down. Since this time, American Samoa has had no further labor violations.

"While I understand that for partisan purposes some might like to compare American Samoa and CNMI in terms of the federal minimum wage debate, I conclude by emphatically stating that CNMI and American Samoa are not alike in terms of our political relationships with the United States. CNMI is under a 'covenant' relationship and American Samoa is an 'unincorporated' and 'unorganized' territory. Our situations involving minimum wage are entirely different. American Samoa complies with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act as determined by Special Industry Committees.

"By terms of its covenant, CNMI is exempt from compliance. However, with the minimum wage bill now before Congress, there is some question as to whether or not CNMI should be brought under the purview of federal labor laws.

"Whatever Congress decides for CNMI, I am hopeful that Members of Congress will recognize that American Samoa is different